

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the subject application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. By the present amendment, claims 1, 3 and 4 are amended, and claim 5 is cancelled. Claims 1-4 are currently pending in this application.

Claims 1, 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Andress (U.S. 5,839,961). Claim 1 has been amended to include the feature of "the outer part of at least one of the flanges is provided with a hook shaped portion (17)," which was formerly part of claim 5. The Andress reference does describe peripheral legs 30 which branch from the radial legs 20. However, there are important differences between the two structures. The Andress structure includes an approximately 90° angle between the peripheral legs and the radial legs. This is not a "hook shape" as set forth in the claim.

Furthermore, the purpose of the hook shaped portion 17 is to create a compressive force transmitted from the hook shaped portion, through the flanges 14, and into the bearing sleeve 13. The hook shaped structure enables the length of the flanges 14 to stay the same, even if shrinkage occurs to the bearing sleeve 13 due to the manufacturing process. On the other hand, the Andress peripheral legs 30 will produce a bending moment in the radial legs 20 when compressed, as the distal end of each peripheral leg is a significant distance from its radial leg intersection. This will create a tensile force on one side of the radial leg and a compressive force on the other side of the radial leg, causing two different deformations at the intersection of the radial

leg and the bearing sleeve 7. Conversely, the claimed aspect will maintain only a compressive force in the flanges 14 to ensure that the flange remains a desired length in order to account for any shrinkage in the bearing sleeve 13. The Andress structure is not able to accomplish that task.

Thus, it should be clear that the hook structure as set forth in the claims is not anticipated by the Andress reference. The claims are believed to be in a condition of allowance over the reference.

Claims 1, 3, and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Valentine (U.S. 4,932,846). Claim 1 has been amended to include the feature of "the outer part of at least one of the flanges is provided with a hook shaped portion (17)," which was formerly part of claim 5. The Valentine reference does not describe any type of hook structure located at the ends of the plates 44, 48.

Furthermore, the Valentine reference includes a bearing sleeve 50 that is separate from the plates 44, 48. Conversely, the present invention incorporates the bearing surfaces and bearing material into one continuous piece 13-17. The Valentine structure requires two separate parts at a minimum, or even more parts if each plate is a separate structure.

Thus, it should be clear that the rounded hook structure and the one-piece construction are not anticipated by the Valentine reference. . The claims are believed to be in a condition of allowance over the reference.

Appl. No. 10/593,510
Amdt. Dated July 22, 2009
Reply to Office action of April 22, 2009

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please
charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 41333.

Respectfully submitted,

PEARNE & GORDON LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronald M. Kachmarik', written in a cursive style.

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Date: July 22, 2009